When your young friend Miss Bragg came I was sick, but my daughter called on her immediately. I hope to see her in a few days.

—

P.S. Mr. Shepley who drew up Mr. Shaw's present will died recently. He was one of our very best lawyers, but cautious & unwilling to make suggestions. Mr. Shaw has advanced very much in his ideas since the will was drawn: but I doubt if he has any thought of its radical reconstruction. To make the Codicil effective would be a sufficient aim. Whether or not Mr. Hill is his legal advisor I have no means of knowing.

St Louis. Dec. 20. 1884

Dr. Asa Gray:-

My dear Sir: For six or seven weeks after my return in Sept., I was house-bound, & since then although I have called to see Mr. Shaw 3 or 4 times I succeeded in meeting him only to-day. I told him I had promised you I would see him & ask if he wished any further suggestions from you as to the School of Botany. He answered promptly & frankly that he had accepted your ideas & was about to make Codicil to that effect, but wished to consult with you about some points, & was intending to write to you about it. I suggested that perhaps you would visit us again & that I should propose to you to do so & while here to give one or two Lectures on Botany with special reference to its future development. He answered "that would be capital & he might inaugurate the School of Botany": that he would add his invitation to mine & hardly any doubt you would come. This was the substance of our 10 minutes talk. He was very

cordial & evidently in earnest. If you can possibly come & give 10 or 14 days to this work, I think it would assure a right disposition of the matter & its immediate consummation. Otherwise it may be "muddled" or put off until too late. Unfortunately I can offer no pecuniary inducements, beyond holding you harmless by $100. for traveling expenses, but the benefit conferred upon us would be great, independently of the School of Botany. We can give you an admirable Hall to speak in, which holds 700 or 800 persons, - or, if preferred, a smaller one holding 200 or 250, - and in either case an appreciative audience, though not a large number of strictly scientific men.

I think Mr. Gray will agree with me in thinking that an intermission from your close study & writing will do you no harm! It may probably secure a future great School of Botanical Science here.

I inclose, in strict confidence, a characteristic letter on the subject from Briton A. Hill, which has puzzled me not a little. I should attach no importance to it except that I know him to be a great deal at Mr. Shaw's, - that in earlier days they were much together, - & that he has evidently had recent conversations with him on the subject in hand. He is a sharp, shrewd lawyer; not trustworthy, if public opinion goes for anything, but I can see no motive of any wrong doing here. I also agree with him that in the present construction of Mr. Shaw's will there are doubtful points & that the risk of waste or loss is great, - if I have been correctly informed as to some of the details. So, after puzzling over it, I conclude to send it to you that you may weigh it for what it is worth. Please return it to me. Mr. Hill's desire to have you here is greatly in his favor & seems to prove that he has no sinister design.

Pardon me for this long letter, but I feel that in cause of Science all work is a labor of love & therefore do not spare you.

With Sincere regards to Mr. Gray -

Your Obl't Frnd. W.G. Eliot.

Of course I did not name Mr. Hill to Mr. Shaw.